

Robinson-Schofield House
221 West Second Street
Madison
Jefferson County
Indiana

HABS No. IND-82

HABS
IND.
39-MAD,
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

ROBINSON-SCHOFIELD HOUSE

Location: 221 West Second Street, Madison, Jefferson County,
Indiana

USGS Madison West Quadrangle Map, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 16.640610. 4288230

Present Owner: Scottish Rite Masons of Indiana

Present Occupant: Unoccupied

Present Use: Under restoration; to be used as a house museum and
Masonic museum

Statement of
Significance: The Robinson-Schofield house, built around 1821, is
one of the few extant early brick houses in Madison.
It is a fine interpretation and distinctive version
of the Federal style in the city, and stands opposite
two historic Federal style houses of the same period,
the Sullivan house (1818), and the Hyatt house (1820).
Taken together they form one of Madison's best sur-
viving street intersections expressive of early 19th
century domestic life and architecture. A long-stand-
ing, however doubtful, tradition states that fourteen
Freemasons assembled here on January 12, 1818 and orga-
nized the Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Indi-
ana.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1821. The controversial tradition
that the house was built in 1817 is crucial because it re-
lates the house to the historic meeting of the Masonic Lodge.
 - a. The tax records for the town of Madison are missing for
the years prior to 1837. The date of 1821 for the con-
struction assumes that William Robinson built the house
shortly after purchasing the lot. When Robinson pur-
chased lot 7 in 1820 he also purchased lot 11 in the same
addition at the same time. Robinson bought the two lots
for a total consideration of \$1100. This small value
paid by Robinson for these whole lots is a further indi-
cation that no house was on this site in 1820.

- b. No factual evidence has been found to support individual private ownership of the property or the presence of a house before 1820. Examination of the Deed Record Index, 1813-1837 did not reveal any reference to lot number 7 before Robinson's purchase in 1820. As well, no evidence for the existence of the house before 1820 or that Alexander Lanier had ever owned the property exists.
- c. When the First Addition West was laid out in 1815, the record of the proprietors' plat in Deed Book "A", page 138 and in the "Plat Book of Madison, 1-A" reveals that "the land between High [now First] Street and the Ohio River [is] to be laid off into such lots as the proprietor may hereafter think most advisable to build upon . . ." The Robinson-Schofield house was designed according to a semi-urban plan, thus relating to a street corner lot. If, as the legend states, the house was located upon the property prior to the platting and construction of the streets in this addition, the house would not have been oriented to its street corner site. Rather, the design of the house would have been executed in a manner that would have been less urban in composition and less oriented to its corner site.

After the streets in this part of the First Addition were laid out in 1815, the street grade was cut below the level of the existing terrain by as much as eight feet to increase drainage and to lessen the slope of the grade of the north-south streets as they approach the river. The Robinson-Schofield house was built upon the original grade of its lot, but its facade was designed to fit the grade of the streets, not the lot. The foundation was built at the street grade, while the first floor is level with the grade of the lot. The Talbot-Hyatt house, across the street, was built between 1819 and 1821, and follows the same conditions in relation to the street grade and corner lot. A window or door to the basement on the Poplar Street facade of the Talbot-Hyatt house appears to be original to the structure; therefore indicating that the street grade in 1819-1821 was located at about the same level as today's grade. This would then confirm that the Robinson-Schofield house was not built prior to 1815, and would also tend to support the estimated date of construction of this house as 1821.

- 2. Architect: No information available.

3. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: Lot number 7 on which the house stands is within the First Addition West in the original city of Madison. This extension to the city was recorded June 4, 1815 in Deed Book A, page 138. The following chain of title to the land on which the structure stands is in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison.
- 1820 Deed, June 2, 1820, recorded August 24, 1820 in Book C, page 26. John Paul and Sarah, his wife, Israel T. Canby and Elizabeth, his wife, John Burnett and Rebecca, his wife, Joseph Canby and Margaret, his wife, sold to William Robinson for \$1100 "lot number seven lying west of West Street and lot number eleven lying west of West Street." The sellers are the proprietors who platted and recorded the First Addition West to the City in 1815. The two lots are located in different areas of the First Addition.
- 1853 Deed, March 29, 1853, recorded August 2, 1854 in Book 10, page 667. John R. Robinson and Mary L. Robinson, his wife, to Thomas J. Robinson for consideration of \$350. "All of the interest of the said party of the first part . . . lot Number seven (7) in the city of Madison, Indiana in the addition west of West Street . . . being the same house and lot in which the said Thomas now resides and in which the said Mary L. Robinson hath an interest as one of the legal heirs of her father the late William Robinson . . ."
- 1854 Deed, July 29, 1854, recorded August 2, 1854 in Deed Book 10, page 668. Coffin O. Page and Eveline B. Page, his wife, Jane Crane and William H. Robinson to Thomas J. Robinson for consideration of \$933. "All of our interest . . . in . . . lot 7 in said addition, situated on the corner of Second Street and Poplar Lane and fronting sixty four (64) feet and three inches on the south side of Second Street and one hundred and fifty eight (158) feet on the east side of Poplar Lane and running through to High (now First) Street."
- 1858 Deed, January 30, 1858, recorded October 13, 1859 in Deed Book 17, page 159. Thomas J. Robinson to John Verry for consideration of \$2196.30. "in the addition west to the city of Madison . . . lot number seven."

- 1866 Quit Claim Deed, August 13, 1866, recorded October 10, 1866 in Deed Book 29, page 238. Euphia Robinson of Steubenville, Ohio to Mary Jane Verry for consideration of \$450 "all of my right title and interest in and to Lot no. 7."
- 1908 Deed, May 4, 1908, recorded May 6, 1908 in Deed Book 80, page 299. Eliza Verry, maiden, Sarah Humphrey and Robert Humphrey, her husband, Anna G. Powell and Edward Powell, her husband, Helen M. Ballard and Addison Ballard, her husband, George C. Verry, Norval M. Verry to William P. Schofield and Charlotte Schofield, husband and wife for consideration of \$2000 "all of lot number seven."

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: No information available.
5. Original plan and construction: The stark simplicity created by the flat wall surfaces, modular-spaced openings, unframed windows, and the absence of cornice moldings of this Federal style brick townhouse is relieved by features which are characteristic of the Ohio Valley's vernacular. The chimney built into the end walls, a rear "L" extension, deeply set window sashes, recessed brick-filled semi-circular arches over the first-story windows, and the brick swayback cornice combine to make the Robinson-Schofield house a distinctive work of local architecture.
6. Alterations and additions: A nineteenth-century photograph of the structure shows that the house 75 years ago was as it is today, even the wood lean-to shed on the south end existed. The photograph also shows that several details have been lost which added to the building's architectural character. Entrance steps and stoops had heavy turned wooden balustrades; first floor windows were nine-over-six light double-hung sash; second floor were six-over-six double-hung sash; both had louvered red shutters. Particularly striking were the four huge chimneys which were covered with pyramidal-shaped caps, reminiscent of colonial chimneys. The photograph also suggests interesting contrasts of materials - dark shutters, light-colored sash, and natural brick walls.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The tradition that the historic Masonic Lodge meeting occurred here is related in a plaque which was placed beside the house in 1965: "In a second floor room of this house fourteen Freemasons

representing nine widely separated Lodges assembled in January 12, 1818 and organized the Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Indiana. Erected by the Grand Lodge F. & A. M. of Indiana, 1965."

The knowledge upon which the plaque's information is based was passed on orally. All written records do not support this notion that the first Masonic assembly occurred in this house. However, if the Masons did not assemble in the Robinson-Schofield house on January 12, 1818, they did meet in a similar space in a private house. It is possible they met in Alexander C. Lanier's home; he was a mason and he arrived in Madison in 1817. He therefore could have built a new house which was used for the meeting.

The first written record which refers to Lanier's home as the Robinson-Schofield house appears seventy years after the event. The first direct link between the Robinson house and the meeting is reported by Dwight L. Smith in a letter: "Actually, the first reference to the Schofield house as the building in which the Grand Lodge was organized, that I have found to date, is in McDonald's History of Freemasonry in Indiana, published 1898."

The ambiguity which surrounds the history of the Robinson-Schofield house is not unusual to local history in general and architectural history in particular. While a house is very much a private possession the history of a people is a possession of the public. Local towns-people cherish their distinctive heritage. The legend that the Robinson-Schofield house was the place where the Freemasons of Indiana were organized is distinctive and will continue to survive indefinitely.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Photograph, ca. 1890, in Daniel McDonald's History of Freemasonry in Indiana. Indianapolis, 1898.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Cull, Brooklyn. James F. C. Lanier, Banker, Patriot.
M. A. Thesis, Department of History, Indiana
University, August 1952.

DAR Cemetery Records. Springdale Cemetery, Madison,
Indiana.

Jefferson County Deed Records, Office of the Recorder,
Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison, Indiana.

Jefferson County Tax Records, City Hall, Madison, Indiana.

Mohoney, "Masonry in Madison," March 4, 1916.

Smith, Dwight L. Letter to Philip Dole, August 10, 1971.

b. Secondary and published sources:

"The Indiana Freemason." November 1929, Vol. 45, no. 8.

"The Indiana Republican," January 17, 1818.

"The Indianapolis Times," September 13, 1927.

Lanier, J. F. D. Sketch of the Life of J. F. D. Lanier.
Madison, 1877.

McDonald, Daniel. History of Freemasonry in Indiana.
Indianapolis, 1898.

"The Madison Courier," November 10, 1884; September
13, 1939.

Smith, Dwight L. Goodly Heritage. Indianapolis, 1968.

Prepared by Philip Dole
Team Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This Federal style brick townhouse was built ca. 1821 and is one of the earliest brick houses in Madison. The stark simplicity of the structure's design is relieved by a rear "L" extension, deeply set window sashes, and recessed voussoir arches over the first-story windows, features which are characteristic of the Ohio Valley's vernacular. The structure is also distinctive because of its semi-urban design: The total building relates to its street corner lot and the facade particularly is designed to correspond to the street grade.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The building is "L" shaped in plan, measures 32'-4" (four-bay front) x 68", with a partially exposed basement on the north (front) and west elevations.
2. Foundations: Foundations and cellar walls are of rough stone, irregularly coursed. Clay subsoil is visible under portions of the cellar walls.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The cellar walls are 18" thick of rough stone. They are plastered on the north exterior and scored to simulate ashlar; the west exterior cellar wall is lightly plastered. The walls of the main section are brick, 13" thick and painted light gray. The wall on the north elevation is laid in Flemish bond; the west wall and east gable end are laid in common bond with headers every sixth course.
4. Structural system, framing: Perimeter walls and some cross walls are load-bearing masonry. The floor joist system and partition and roof framing are of wood. The east porch and lean-to addition also have wood framing.
5. Porches, stoops, etc.: The entrance steps and stoops on Second and Poplar Streets are concrete, recently rebuilt. The one-story porch on the garden side is supported by Tuscan columns, 9" in diameter.
6. Chimneys: Two of the four original end chimneys remain; each serves two fireplaces.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The front entrance door on Second Street has a louvred glass transom overhead, and the upper half of the door is glazed.
 - b. Windows: First-floor windows on the north (front) elevation are one-over one light double-hung sash with recessed voussoir semi-circular arches with brick filled lunettes overhead. Second-floor windows are six-over-one light double-hung sash with soldier-coursed flat arches. Windows on the west elevations are one-over-one double-hung sash at the first level and six-over-one double-hung sash. All openings have flat stone lintels.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Cellar: The street-level basement has a three room plan, extending under the main section of the house. The floors are earthen and walls are of rough stone, irregularly coursed.
 - b. First floor: The "L" shaped plan consists of a double parlor, dining room, kitchen and lavatory-laundry. Exterior brick walls indicate that the kitchen, and bedroom above, were additions to the original structure.
 - c. Second floor: Similar in plan to the first floor, the second has four bedrooms and a bath.
2. Stairways: The stair to the second floor commences in the dining room, having an 8" rise with 9" treads. The original stair had a steeper rise, as well as a common landing with access from both the parlor and dining room.
3. Flooring: Panel wood floors, 5" in width, are in all rooms, with the exception of the lavatory and bathroom, which are covered with linoleum.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings are papered over plaster.
5. Decorative features: Openings have moulded trim: 4" wide on windows, 5" wide on doors.
6. Heating: The house was originally heated with eight fire-places. A hot water radiator system (furnace in the basement) now heats the entire house.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The lot, 61'6" x 171'9", fronts northward on Second Street, south on First, and lies adjacent to Poplar Street on the west. The "L" shaped building is on the property lines of the northwest corner of the lot.
2. Landscape design: The garden, on the corner of First and Poplar Streets, is raised above the street level. Stone retaining walls, 5'6" to 7'6", define the property lines around the garden area.

Prepared by Melvin Rotsch
Project Supervisor
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1971

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and Historic Madison. The structure was measured and drawn in the summer of 1971 under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Melvin M. Rotsch (Texas A & M University), with student assistant architects John G. Albers (University of Florida), Bruce E. Lynch (Washington University), H. T. Moriarity (University of Texas), John M. Szubski (Princeton University), and architectural historian Philip Dole (University of Oregon), at the HABS Field Office in Madison, Indiana. The data was edited and expanded in November 1978 in the HABS office by Jan E. Cigliano, staff historian. Photographs were taken by staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in 1971.

ADDENDUM TO
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XEROGRAPHIC COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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